

Sir David Martin (I)

Title 61

David Martin, (after 1970 Sir David) had more influence on 40 years of my career than anyone else. Early in January 1956 he was visited by John Jarrold, the owner and publisher of *Discovery, The Magazine of Scientific Progress*, who asked David Martin to suggest a successor to its Editor who had just left. David suggested me and on 26 January I met the Journal's owner, John Jarrold at 244 High Holborn, which was to become my Editorial Office. I was offered the Editorship at that interview, and as I liked John Jarrold for his sincerity, he was a Quaker, I accepted. [Title 62]

David Martin (1914-1976) was a Scotsman, born in Fife, and two years older than I. During the almost 30 years [1947-1976] when he was the Executive Secretary of the Royal Society, he acted as the most skilful organiser and administrator of science of the century. Although primarily a Servant of the Fellowship of the Royal Society, his influence extended over European, Commonwealth and World Science through his membership of the innumerable committees of scientists which he was instrumental in creating and guiding during his life.

He always seemed available for help and advice to anyone who needed it. The immense organisation necessary for the International Geophysical Year 1957-1958, the I.G.Y., flowed smoothly from his office, first in Burlington House and later from Carlton House Terrace, when an expansion of staff and space had become essential. He was a portly gentleman and carried it well, and when later he, Trevor Williams, the Editor of I.C.I.'s *Endeavour* and I, had monthly luncheons at our respective clubs to gossip about the latest scientific events, his enjoyment of good food and wine was a delight to see.

All three of us were chemists, David from Edinburgh, Trevor from Oxford and I from London, but David Martin's gifts were far greater than ours. His wide vision, his encyclopaedic knowledge of all important scientists, and not only in Britain, the way they worked and thought, he never appeared to be under any pressure, he always was a source of wisdom and encouragement, his ability to see broad issues while being meticulous about details were quite outstanding. Always sympathetic and helpful to all scientists, his sole interest in life was the Royal Society and its fellows. Kipling might have written 'IF' with David Martin in mind.

The all too rare perfect obituary was written for him by Sir Harrie Massey and Sir Harold Thompson and was published in the *Biographical Memoirs of Fellows of the Royal Society*, November 1978. (David himself was of course never a Fellow himself, as the Society's statutes did not allow it).

